

A Group of the Holy Defense Veterans and Commanders Will Meet With the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei on Wednesday On the Occasion of Beginning of the Sacred Defense Week

IRAN NEWS

Health Ministry Announced on Sunday That the Number of Deaths From the Coronavirus Pandemic in Iran Increased to 144,301 With 14 More Iranians Killed by the Virus Over the Past 24 Hours

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No Raisi-Biden Meeting In New York

TEHRAN (PressTV) - President Ebrahim Raisi says he has no plans for either meeting or talking with his American counterpart, Joe Biden, during his upcoming trip to New York, where the Iranian chief executive is slated to address the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

"I do not think that such a meeting is going to take place," Raisi told CBS News' 60 Minutes program during an interview conducted Tuesday, which the channel is going to broadcast in full on Sunday.

Iran's president made the comment when he was asked, "Are you open to a meeting with President Biden? A face-to-face?" adding, "I don't believe having a meeting or a talk with him will be beneficial."

The Iranian president was also asked whether he could see any differences between the Biden administration and the administration of his predecessor Donald Trump.

"The new administration in the U.S., they claim that they are different from the Trump administration," Raisi said, adding, "They have said it in their messages to us. But we haven't witnessed any changes in reality."

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CBI Tightens Monetary Policy

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has again raised its benchmark interbank interest rate amid efforts by the lender to tighten monetary policy and help the government with its efforts to tame the inflation.

A CBI statement covered in report by the Fars news agency said that the bank had increased the interbank rate by 13 basis points to 20.93%.

It is the fourth time in a calendar month that the CBI raises the interbank rate, a measure that affects the loans given to households and businesses.

Iran's interbank interest rate was 20.65% in late August, down from a yearly high of 21.31% reported in late July.

The tightening of the monetary policy by the CBI comes amid Iranian government plans to control Iran's annual inflation rate at levels around 40%.

Iran's consumer prices index rose by one percentage point in August to 41.5%, according to figures by the Iranian statistics agency.

Economists say the high but controlled inflation rate in Iran is mainly a result of a continued American economic pressure as well as the closures and lockdowns caused by the coronavirus pandemic over the past two years.

Iranian finance ministry had vowed earlier this month it would try to maintain the interbank interest rate at levels below 21% to help businesses and manufacturers secure the cash flow they need.

Tehran Ready for Prisoner Swap With Washington



IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - The spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry has said that Tehran is ready to implement the agreement on the exchange of prisoners with Washington and it is now "up to the U.S. administration" to decide whether or not it wants to keep its end of the deal.

"We have already voiced our readiness to exchange inmates with the U.S., and we are still ready to do so. Negotiations have been conducted in different ways over the matter, and parties have reached the necessary agreements. It is now up to the U.S. administration to decide whether it wants to implement this agreement or not. We are prepared to enforce it," Nasser Kan'ani told ISNA in an interview published on Sunday.

The agreement was reached in Vienna on the sidelines of negotiations concerning the Iran deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), with world powers.

Kanaani also underlined that the Islamic Republic will never sacrifice its own political independence for the sake of certain diplomatic relations, roundly dismissing allegations that Russia is obstructing the Vienna talks on the JCPOA revival and removal of sanctions against Tehran.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran will not sacrifice its political independence for the sake of [diplomatic] relations with any other countries. The same approach is also being exercised throughout the sanctions removal talks. Russia is a signatory to the JCPOA, and has naturally participated in the negotiation process and made comments," he said.

Kanaani also rejected claims that Russia has asked Iran to delay the agreement until a later time in winter. The senior Iranian diplomat went on to dismiss allegations that Russia is obstructing the talks in the Austrian capital, stressing that it is the US side that must take on its responsibility, and contribute to the conclusion of the accord.

"The fact that [the United States of] America occasionally tends to level allegations against the Islamic Republic of Iran and Russia is simply a blame game," Kanaani said.

The spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry also stressed that Russia and China have facilitated and are assisting the advancement of Vienna talks, emphasizing that the official positions of Moscow and Beijing are completely in support of JCPOA revival negotiations and Tehran's stance.

"The U.S. government is a party that has left the negotiations, and is now inventing excuses and obstructing the conclusion of the final agreement. It is worth mentioning that the political independence of the Islamic Republic of Iran is so important that it will not be influenced by the political view of any other country," Kanaani said.

The top Iranian diplomat also called on Saudi Arabia to adopt serious measures on humanitarian grounds and release Iranian national Khalil Dardmand, who was arrested by Saudi forces in the holy city of Mecca in July.

Arbaeen, Day of Grandeur of Shiites

Once again on Saturday, Shiites worldwide especially in Karbala of Iraq showed the unity for marking Arbaeen which is the day the grandeur of Shiites is put on display through holding march and procession to mark the anniversary of 40th day after the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS), the third Imam of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) Household.

This year the ceremony was held in style and with a massive turnout of Shiites from any part of the world in Karbala where Imam Hussein (AS)'s shrine is.

According to reports only over twenty million pilgrims converged on the Iraqi shrine city of Karbala to mark Arbaeen, while millions of people in their own countries marked the day like Iranians did in the country through holding mourning ceremonies. It is the world's biggest religious gathering, keenly observed in Iraq, Iran, Bahrain, Lebanon and many other countries.

The black-clad pilgrims gathered at Imam Hussein's holy shrine in Karbala on Saturday to culminate a week-long procession in commemoration of the martyrdom anniversary of the Prophet Mohammad's grandson, who was killed along with his companions during the battle of Karbala in 680 AD.

Men, women, teens and elders came together in their millions in the Iraqi city to pay tribute and renew their allegiance to Imam Hussein (AS), who is the all-time icon of fighting injustice, oppression and despotism.

The annual event, which is one of the largest religious congregations in the world, brings together a deluge of Imam Hussein's lovers and devotees from various nationalities who undertake an 80-km walk between the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala.

Tents and special stands called Moukeb in Arabic are set up on the path leading to the shrine to provide pilgrims with food and other services.

In the past two years, attendance estimates were lower than usual due to coronavirus measures that limited the number of foreign pilgrims entering Iraq.

"We are happy to serve as many pilgrims as possible. We all noticed these exceptional numbers of pilgrims that came to Karbala after the coronavirus pandemic," said Ali al-Badri, an official in charge of Iraq's media services, adding that the teams covering departments such as cleaning and the provision of services were mobilized to cater for the needs of the pilgrims coming from Iraq and abroad.

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No Dollars for Pakistan Food Imports From Iran, Afghanistan

KARACHI (Dispatches) - Pakistan food importers, especially vegetables, from Afghanistan and Iran have been relying on the grey market to make payments since they are not allowed to buy dollars from banks or exchange companies, Dawn has learnt.

The country has been facing an acute shortage of tomatoes, onions, potatoes, etc after floods destroyed crops pushing up prices to unprecedented levels across the country.

This situation has forced the government to immediately allow imports of these foodstuffs from neighboring countries to bridge the supply and demand gap but it has not made any arrangements for the provision of greenbacks to make payments against these imports.

Quite interestingly, the importers were asked to enter into barter deals with their Afghan and Iranian counterparts by exporting food items available in Pakistan.

Sources in the Peshawar Chamber of Commerce and Industry told Dawn that import deals in local currencies are possible with Kabul as Afghanis are available in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

However, the sources maintained that the Afghan exporters usually ask for U.S. dollars and insist to pay cash or make payments through Dubai. For Dubai payments, the hundi or hawala system is used.

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Chabahar Port Crucial for Landlocked Afghanistan's Foreign Trade

KARACHI (Dispatches) - Landlocked Afghanistan faces many issues related to trade as it has to cross Iran or Pakistan to reach water ports as the seaports accelerate the rate of international trade and act as an inhibitor in trade cost.

Mirza Ahmad Ebrahimi, a PhD research scholar writing in Khaama Press in an op-ed page analyzed Afghanistan's two options, Chabahar or Karachi seaport.

Chabahar seaport via Iran was found to be the utmost sustainable one as a trade route. To connect Afghanistan with Iran's Zabul province for smoothing and accelerating goods movement, the Delaram-Zaranj Highway with a 218 km roadway in the Nimruz province was designed and constructed by the government of India at the request of Afghanistan and cost USD 175 million.

Zabul province in Iran is well-connected by road to the Port of Chabahar. It is one of the busiest roads in Afghanistan and provides an important trade route between Afghanistan, Iran, and the rest of Asia, said Ebrahimi.

Chabahar road is much shorter and more stable than any of the routes in Pakistan, making it perhaps the most efficient means that Afghan traders can reach the final destination for their exports, where 80 per cent of Afghanistan's cargo traffic now lies.

Furthermore, the Chabahar route paves the opportunity to access two countries' markets with a population of 1.4 billion rather than one country with a population of 200 million people.

Since the port begin its functioning, Afghanistan's dependency on Pakistan decreased significantly, and the trade with Pakistan fell to USD 500 million in 2018 compared to USD 2.5 billion, reported Khaama Press.

Meanwhile, Chabahar Port, located in Iran's southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchistan, is the lifeline Afghanistan needs to reinvigorate its trade potential. In the meantime, such trade opportunity cuts costs and leads to greater revenue for economic empowerment and international integration which help in the county's prosperity and stability, said Ebrahimi.

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Arbaeen Procession Proves Unshakable Bond of Iran, Iraq

TEHRAN (MNA) - Arbaeen procession has proved that Iran and Iraq enjoy an unshakable bond, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said. Commenting on holding Arbaeen trek, the Iranian top diplomat tweeted that once again Arbaeen showed Iran and Iraq have had an unshakable bond. "We sincerely appreciate the Iraqi nation and government and armed forces of this country for properly hosting Iranian and non-Iranian pilgrims during Arbaeen," he further noted.

Leader Receives President Raisi After Return From Samarkand

TEHRAN (MNA) – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei received Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on Sunday.



Meanwhile, the 22nd Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit on Friday officially announced Iran's accession to the permanent membership of the regional international organization.

On the sidelines of the summit, the president had meetings with the leaders of various countries, including Russia, China, Pakistan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, India and the Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

The president is also scheduled to visit New York on Monday (today) to participate in the annual meeting of the United Nations General Assembly.

Raisi met with Ayatollah Khamenei on his return from his visit to Uzbekistan and presented a report on the meetings and agreements at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit, as well as the upcoming plans for his trip to New York to participate in the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Expressing his satisfaction with the report and the measures taken, Ayatollah Khamenei wished success to the president on the eve of his trip to New York.

Heading a high-ranking delegation, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi left Tehran on Wednesday morning for Samarkand, Uzbekistan to attend the 22nd meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

During his visit to Uzbekistan, Iran and Uzbekistan signed 17 cooperation documents in the fields of energy, industry, agriculture, sports, and culture.

Zionist Regime's Gradual Collapse Obvious

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The signs of historical pace and gradual collapse of the Zionist regime is appearing all the more, Secretary-General of the World Assembly of Islamic Awakening Ali Akbar Velayati said.

Velayati made the remarks in a Sunday statement commemorating the 40th anniversary of the massacre of oppressed Palestinian people in Sabra and Shatila, cautioning those who are seeking to normalize ties with the Zionist regime.

The Sabra and Shatila massacres are a disgraceful stain for the regime, he said, noting that the heinous act is one of the most important criteria of lack of legitimacy and international popularity for the Zionist oppressors.

The Phalanges militia in Lebanon raided Palestinian camps in Sabra and Shatila from 16 to 18 September 1982 under the baseless excuse that Bachir Pierre Gemayel, a Lebanese militia commander, was killed on September 14, 1982, Velayati said.

The militiamen killed men, women, children and even old civilians in a cold blood attack, which is rare in the history of international crimes, he added.

The attack revealed the real face of the Zionist regime as well as the fake supporters of human rights, the secretary general said, noting that the then Israeli war minister Ariel Sharon, who is also known as the butcher of Sabra and Shatila, ordered the massacre, which left around 3,000 Palestinians dead.

He also underlined that nowadays that the Palestinians have chosen the best and the only option, which is resistance in order to pave the way for the collapse of the regime, unfortunately, certain regional states ignore the taboo of political and diplomatic ties with the fake regime instead of backing the Palestinian cause.

But the divine tradition and the historical experience have proven that pawn and treasonous governments, which are dependent on the global arrogance, will not succeed in their path, but they will face divine and public wraths, he warned.

Certain new rulers in the region, who plan to normalize ties with the regime and recognize it despite its heinous crimes, should be sure that the historical pace and gradual collapse of the regime are coming out more than ever; so, permanent shame will remain for supporters of the regime and the supporters will experience the same fate, he added.

The World Assembly of Islamic Awakening condemns the genocide once more, advising all rulers to step aside from the regime and support the Palestinian cause, he said, concluding that all scholars, leaders, parties, Muslims and freedom-loving nations are urged to show their support for the oppressed Palestinian nation.

Iran Aims to Get Economic Advantage From SCO Membership

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran seeks economic advantage in its membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), a senior official at the Iranian Foreign Ministry said.

Accession to the SCO will unlock new markets for Iran's energy, Mehdi Safari, deputy foreign minister for economic diplomacy, said in a state TV program on Sunday.

The SCO market is evaluated over nine billion dollars that can be an ample opportunity to expand exports, Safari underlined.

The official went on to say that the SCO market is not limited to energy, but it includes areas of technology, engineering services and exports of commodities.

After Iran's membership in the SCO, the member states, especially Central Asian states, would have access to international waters through Iran which facilitates overseas transit, Safari noted.

On September 15, a document on formalities or commitments letting Iran be a permanent member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was signed during a meeting between Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and the SCO Secretary-General Zhang Ming.

As Safari announced, the SCO is scaling into a globally effective organization through accepting new members.

About the process of Iran's membership in the SCO, the official said that 49 related documents have been submitted to Iran's Parliament for approval and there are other documents that should be approved in parliaments of other eight member states.

Then, the heads of states will sign the agreements during the next year's summit to be held in India, as said by Safari who added that the process of Iran's accession will then be completed.

Tehran Voices Concern Over Kyrgyz-Tajik Clashes

TEHRAN (PressTV) - The spokesperson of Iran's Foreign Ministry has voiced concern over recent military clashes between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, calling on both sides to solve disputes through peaceful means.

Nasser Kanaani released a statement on Saturday in reaction to recent clashes between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in joint border areas.

Expressing concern over the escalation of conflict, the spokesman called for sustainable peace and solving the disputes through dialogue and peaceful means.

Referring to the Islamic Republic of Iran's friendly relations with the two former Soviet republics, the diplomat expressed Tehran's readiness to help resolve the issues between the two neighbors.

The statement comes after fresh clashes erupted on Friday morning in joint border areas. Both sides have accused each other of using tanks, mortars, rocket artillery, and assault drones to attack outposts and nearby settlements.

According to reports, the clashes have claimed the lives of 54 people so far. Kyrgyzstan announced that 24 of its citizens have been killed while some 137,000 others evacuated from the conflict zone.

On Friday evening, the Kyrgyz president's office said in a statement the two sides had agreed in a meeting in Uzbekistan to order a ceasefire and the withdrawal of troops from the disputed areas.

According to the latest reports, the ceasefire is holding up despite accusations that both sides trade over violations of the truce.

Douhan's Report, of Great Significance

TEHRAN (IP) - Secretary of Iran's High Council for Human Rights says the report of a special United Nations rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights is of great importance.

A special United Nations rapporteur has called for the removal of unilateral sanctions on Iran in a report that details the effect of decades of embargos on the country.

In the report, published on Monday, Alena Douhan, whose role is focused on the negative result of the sanctions, said that they had affected nearly every aspect of life in the country and called for them to be lifted.

According to Douhan, even as medicines and food are supposed to be exempt from sanctions, general licenses issued by the US Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) aimed at ensuring exemptions "appeared to be ineffective and nearly non-existent."

She said delivery of medicines and medical equipment to Iran was "severely undermined" by the effects of sanctions on finance, trade, shipping, insurance and over-compliance on the part of foreign businesses and suppliers.

"These constitute serious impediments to the enjoyment of the right to the highest attainable standard of health by all Iranians."

Vice-President of the Judiciary for International Affairs and Secretary of Iran's High Council for Human Rights Kazem Gharibabadi explained the importance of Alena Douhan's report on the effects of unilateral US sanctions on the Iranian people. This report states that unilateral American sanctions have affected all aspects of Iranian people's lives.

Secretary of the IR of Iran's High Council for Human Rights emphasized that the UN special rapporteur has clearly stated that unilateral sanctions have affected the Iranian people's political, social, economic and human rights aspects and have created international responsibility for sanctions.

Gharibabadi emphasized that Iran will seriously follow up the results of Alena Douhan's report so that the destructive and negative effects of sanctions on the people of Iran are truly expressed.

Iran, Afghanistan To Build New Transit Route

TEHRAN (MNA) - Local sources on Saturday reported that a new transit route will be built between Afghanistan and Iran in Nimruz province.

Local sources said that the new transit route will be built due to the inadequacy of the Silk Bridge – the only route for the transfer of commercial goods between Afghanistan and Iran in Nimroz province to solve the problems of traders and facilitate the passage of commercial goods.

The Silk Bridge in Nimruz province, on the border lines between Afghanistan and Iran, occasionally witnesses excessive overcrowding.

Merchants in Nimroz have welcomed the construction of a new transit route and expressed their hope that with this initiative, problems in the field of export and import of commercial goods will be solved.

The Silk bridge border crossing is the only connection between Zaranj city and the Milak border crossing of Iran, and half of this bridge is on the soil of Iran and the other half is part of Afghanistan.

13th Gov't Puts Aside Absolute Westernism

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Member of national security commission of the Iranian Parliament described Iran as the anchor of stability and security in the region, saying the country has put aside absolute Westernism.

Ebrahim Rezaie said that Iran along with its military and security capabilities has been able to create security in the region.

He described successful participation in regional and global agreements as considered the reason for balancing diplomacy, saying that Shanghai treaty includes half of the world's population and a huge economy, and Iran's SCO membership help develop its economy and neutralize West's cruel sanctions.

He referred to Iran's transit corridor as another advantage for our country's membership in the SCO, saying that it will connect countries like China in the East to Europe and the western Iran, and connect Central Asian states like Russia to the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Rezaie pointed to 31% growth in Iran's economic interactions with SCO member states in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year, saying that increasing the level of trade and economic exchanges with SCO members requires precise and expert work.

Tehran Eyes on Knowledge-Based To Develop Maritime Fleet

TEHRAN (MNA) - Managing director of Iran Shipbuilding and Offshore Industries Complex (ISOICO) has said domestic knowledge-based companies have great potential for the development of the country's maritime fleet that should not be neglected, the portal of Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) reported on Sunday.

Stressing the necessity of developing the country's maritime transport fleet and its positive impact on the economy, Salman Zarbi said: "Maritime industry is considered one of the most effective industries in the world and more than 90 percent of the world's transportation and trade takes place through maritime transportation."

"Many countries have put great importance upon the advantages of their sea transportation, while this economic capacity has been neglected in our country despite having 5,800 kilometers of coastline in both north and south of the country," he said.

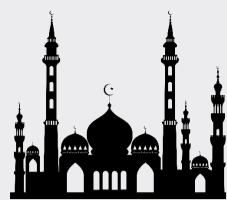
According to Zarbi, knowledge-based companies can reduce the gap between Iran's maritime transportation industry and those of developed countries and create favorable conditions so that the country can benefit from the advantage of this industry in economic development.

He said the Iranian maritime industry needs to enter the shipbuilding arena because restrictions caused by the sanctions have locked down the country's transportation industry and prevented shipping lines from getting new and up-to-date ships.

"We must definitely develop our marine transport fleet and one of the strategies in this regard is to have our own national industries to help improve the marine transport fleet," the ISOICO head said.

Pointing out that the world's maritime transport has become a competitive market, he said: "We must transform Iran's maritime industries to be able to compete in global markets in the best way possible."

"We should consider exporting services and vessels as well to improve our position both at the regional and at the international level," he stressed.



PRAYER TIME

■ Noon (Zohr)	12:58
■ Evening (Maghreb)	19:24
■ Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:26
■ Tomorrow's Sunrise	06:50

54. He said, "Indeed ye have been in manifest error - ye and your fathers."

55. They said, "Have you brought us the Truth, or are you one of those who jest?"

Surah 21. The Prophets (54 - 55)

Tehran Eyes Free Trade With SCO Member states

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Alireza Peyman-Pak said that President Ebrahim Raisi has stressed the need for establishing Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the TPO portal reported.

Making the remarks in an interview with the national TV, Peyman-Pak pointed to the significance of removing the barriers to financial and banking exchanges with the SCO member countries, saying: "During President Raisi's meetings with the presidents of some SCO members, the development of trade and the removal of obstacles and challenges were emphasized."

"We have had a good experience with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU); 80 percent of the process [for reaching an FTA with EAEU] has been completed and we will finalize technical discussions in December and the draft of the agreement will be sent to the parliament for approval," the TPO head said.

"Since most of the Eurasian countries are also members of the Shanghai Organization, the president suggested that we pursue establishing free trade agreements in the Shanghai area as well," Peyman-Pak added.

In the meetings that were held during the SCO summit in Uzbekistan, the presidents of the members of the pact, the monitoring members, and the partners all put forward good words in this regard, the official said.

"Regarding financial and banking issues with countries like Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan, we have taken good measures to use alternative routes. Also, the removal of the dollar and the euro in mutual trade will also be put on the agenda, and the parties will be offered the use of new insurance and financial facilities that our central bank has considered," he added.

According to Peyman-Pak, another issue raised by the president was the use of transit capacities of the SCO members.



"We have the North-South Corridor and we focused on it in the last few months and developed the country's transit capacities [through this corridor], but the workload is large and requires SCO members' participation as well," the official said.

Iran officially joined the SCO at the 22nd SCO summit on Friday.

He added that "In the financial and banking discussions with countries such as Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, we have taken good measures to use alternative channels."

In addition, the removal of the U.S. dollar and the euro will be on agenda and it was offered to the other sides the use of insurance and new financial channels that our central bank has in mind."

He said that during the Uzbekistan summit, the Iranian delegation held good talks with the Russian president on North-South Corridor, adding that there were also good talks with the Chinese side on the East-West corridor.

The TPOI head further said that "In the field of customs, similar to the agreement signed between the 3 countries of Iran, Azerbaijan and Russia a few months ago, negotiations have also been conducted with other countries. All these measures will lead to the development of trade and the creation of stable income for the Islamic Republic."

The world's largest energy producers, including Iran and Russia, are members of the Shanghai organization, and the world's largest energy consumers, China and India, are also members of the organization, Peyman-Pak said.

He further said that a mechanism should be defined for sustainable cooperation in the field of energy security. There should be the possibility of stable energy exchanges in other energy fields and the issue of energy supply should be made safe and stable.

Pointing out that the issue of food security was also emphasized in these meetings, he stated that the president emphasized issues such as health and the use of Iran's capacities and capabilities in the field of health, including the export of medical equipment, biotechnological drugs and health tourism services to the SCO member states by Iran.

Iran-Pakistan Border Market To Open in October

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Pakistan Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar has said the Pakistan-Iran Pishin Border Market is expected to open in the coming month, which will help promote free trade between the two countries.

The minister made the remarks during a meeting here with Iran's parliamentary delegation, according to the ministry's statement.

The border market's construction has been completed and its inauguration is on the cards, while work on the other three border markets including in Gabd, Rimdan, and Kohak will start soon, he said.

Qamar said that a total of 12 border markets were proposed to increase the trade volume between the two countries, out of which nine have been mutually approved, adding that there will be trade activities through these border markets under a barter system.

There is a dire need to increase the trade of petroleum and gas, the minister was quoted as saying in the statement.

During the meeting, Malek Fazeli, head of the Iranian parliamentary delegation, said that Pakistan and Iran are neighbouring countries with a common border of around 900 km at which mutual trade as well as the movement of people continues throughout the year.

Fazeli expressed hope that there will be an increase in trade between the two countries, according to the statement.

Weekly Trade Volume Up By 28% on IME

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) last week witnessed trade of 2,544,000 tons of commodities with a total trading value of nearly \$609m, logging growths of 28% and 31% in volume and value of trades compared with the week before that.



According to a report by the IME's International Affairs and PR, the exchange saw on its metals and minerals trading floor trade of 2,007,000 tons of commodities worth nearly \$357m.

On this floor the IME sold 1,113,380 tons of cement, 345,000 tons of iron ore, 382,942 tons of steel, 139,000 tons of sponge iron, 16,745 tons of zinc, 8,225 tons of aluminum, 8,710 tons of copper, 200 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 200 tons of coke and 29 kg of gold bars.

It's worth noting that the IME also traded 2 units of apartment on its real estate trading floor.

Furthermore, the IME saw on both domestic and export pits of its oil and petrochemical trading floor 526,752 tons of commodities worth nearly \$245m.

Commodities traded on this floor included 92,389 tons of polymeric products, 217,050 tons of vacuum bottom, 48,900 tons of lube cut, 30,877 tons of chemicals, 1,800 tons of sulfur, 4,964 tons of base oil, 250 tons of insulation and 129,168 tons of bitumen.

The IME also traded within the same week 10,265 tons of commodities on its side market.

Four Iranian Car Models to Be Assembled in Venezuela

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro has announced four Iranian car models are to be assembled in his country by a state company.

The price of Iranian cars is estimated between 12 to 16 thousand dollars, a Spanish-language news agency of Europa Press quoted President Maduro on Sunday as saying at the Iran-Venezuela industrial exhibition that started work in Caracas on September 14.

Venirauto – a Venezuelan industrial manufacturing company – is to assemble the Iranian cars in Venezuela, Maduro has said while referring to Iran as a country of achievement, production, and knowledge.

Then, he noted that the Venezuelan youth are to be sent to Iran for attending technological and scientific courses within the framework of the bilateral agreement.

Iran-Venezuela scientific, industrial and technological expo fair was held in Caracas on September 14-18.

Four Iranian car models to be assembled in Venezuela During the visit of the Venezuelan president to Iran in late June 2022, the two sides signed a document on bilateral cooperation for 20 years while both are under tough sanctions from the United States.

China, Turkey Dominating Iran Furniture Market

TEHRAN – Head of Carpenters and Furniture Manufacturers

Union of Iran says 60% of the people in the country cannot afford to buy furniture, admitting that China and Turkey are dominating Iran's furniture market.

Speaking to ILNA, Alireza Abbasi said that in the past, people could buy a suitable and comfortable set of furniture with a price between 10 to 15 million

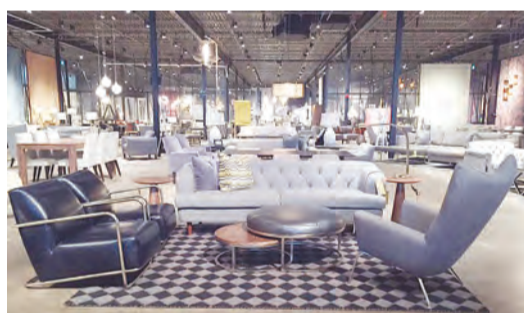
tomans but today due to the livelihood problems and rise in prices, 60% of the middle class people of the society, namely workers and clerk, have excluded the furniture from their list of their shoppings.

He admitted that currently furniture business in the country does not feel well and struggling, and around 10% of the occupation is busy in the furniture industry.

Abbasi reiterated that middlemen and intermediary companies have been placed between the final products producers and suppliers of raw materials, and for this reason the raw materials are supplied to the real consumers with higher prices.

He noted that furniture manufacturing workshops are working with 40% of their capacities and there are signs that people prefer to repair their old furniture rather than purchasing new ones and the price for repairing the furniture is on the rise and this has also

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK



created some problems for this business because some people even change their minds for repairing and they throw away their furniture or get along with them.

Abbasi reiterated that recession dominates this industry and shutdown of furniture production units has turned into a normal act in recent days, and this is a big threat for this industry because considerable

amount of human resources is busy in this industry.

Pointing to the ban on imports of raw materials for furniture production, he said that the ban has caused some people to monopolize distribution of raw materials of this industry and they can easily push this market towards and direction they like.

On the ban on cutting the trees in Iranian woods, he said that furniture wood is imported and currently beech wood is sold in the market for 34m tomans per meter.

On the amount of furniture exports, Abbasi said that exports of furniture stand around \$70m and it is expected this figure to hit \$1b, adding that Iranian furniture is exported to Iraq, Pakistan, Georgia, Armenia and Oman but currently China and Turkey dominate Iran's furniture market because the final price of their products is very cheap.

More Gov't Cooperation Needed With Steelmakers for Using Mineral Capacities

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Esfahan Steel Company (ESCO) in the Digital Mining Conference and Expo 2022 said that digital development in different sectors will lead to increase productivity and risk management and the country with enjoying good condition in this field has painted a good outlook for the future.

Iraj Rokhsati said that the move towards markets and new ecosystems, developing products baskets and increasing the share of market are the other achievements of this sector. He then referred to this point that ESCO has acted strongly in using smart systems in its production line and management systems and support and today the company is one of the leaders in this sector in the world, adding that knowledge of the youths and experience of the elites in this field are two wings of development and boom in industries and therefore it needs to much better use these potentials. He added that the company with such power could progress strongly despite 20 years of sanctions and 12 years of maximum sanctions pressure.



Rokhsati noted that in the developed countries the average depth of exploration and exploitation of the mines is 300 meters and the average in the world is 80 meters while this figure in Iran is 10 meters in the best condition. He went on to say that using digital tools, smartization and upgraded equipment in exploitation and exploration is very applicable and it can improve the condition, adding that in fact in the field of the exploration there is no favorable performance in the country and more cooperation are needed between the government and the big steelmakers.

He went on to say that ESCO is mother of mining in the country and steelmakers of the country should not face problems in providing raw materials while the request of the exploration section of the government awaits the decision of minister of the industry, mine and trade which has been left undecided yet.

Rokhsati added that for the first time in 55 years of ESCO age we witness real production has been ahead of 3-million-ton production schedule this year but the support of the ministry as the custodian of the mines in the country is necessary.

HOSCO Wins Top Award At HATAM Festival

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN – The CEO of Hormozgan Steel Company (HOSCO) was awarded with special statue award during the fourth



national festival on supporting the national production, so called HATAM Festival.

In the closing ceremony of HATAM Festival which was held in presence of some officials and managers of top companies at IRIB Conference Hall, the CEO of Hormozgan Steel Company Mr. Ataollah Maroufkhani was awarded with the special statue of the festival.

The company won the award for its project of manufacturing ultrafiltration membranes with using the used reverse osmosis membranes.

It is worth noting that this project can prevent flight of forex from the country and it will boost the lifecycle of these layers in the country.

Erdogan Targets Joining SCO

ISTANBUL (Dispatches) - President Tayyip Erdogan said he was targeting membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) for NATO-member Turkey, broadcaster NTV and other media said.

He was speaking to reporters after attending the SCO summit in Uzbekistan before heading to the United States.

"Our relations with these countries will be moved to a much different position with this step," Erdogan said.

"When asked if he meant membership of the SCO, he said, "Of course, that's the target".



France Sends Latest Nuclear Shipment to Japan

CHERBOURG (Dispatches) - Two ships carrying reprocessed nuclear fuel destined for Japan set sail Saturday morning from northern France, an AFP photographer said, despite criticism from environmental campaigners.

The fuel was due to leave the northern French port city of Cherbourg earlier this month but was delayed by the breakdown of loading equipment.

Environmental activists have denounced the practice of transporting such highly radioactive materials, calling it irresponsible. The previous transport of MOX fuel to Japan in September 2021 drew protests from environmental group Greenpeace.



Russia Launches Strikes on Ukrainian Troops in Several Regions



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia's defense ministry said that its forces had launched strikes on Ukrainian positions in several parts of Ukraine, and accused Kyiv of carrying out shelling near the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant.

Russian forces conducted their strikes in the Kherson, Mykolaiv, Kharkiv and Donetsk regions, according to the ministry, which added that Ukrainian forces had carried out an unsuccessful offensive near Pravdyne in Kherson.

Radiation levels at Zaporizhzhia, Europe's biggest nuclear power plant, remain normal, according to the ministry. It said two incidents of Ukrainian shelling were recorded near the plant on Saturday.

A spokesperson for Ukraine's foreign ministry denied that Ukrainian forces had carried out shelling near the facility in the south of the country.

Russia and Ukraine have repeatedly accused each other of shelling the Zaporizhzhia plant. The U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency passed a resolution on Thursday demanding that Russia end its occupation of the facility.

Alexey Kulemzin, the mayor of the eastern Ukrainian city of Donetsk, which is controlled by pro-Russian separatists, said on Telegram that four people had been killed by shelling in a central part of the city. Fragments of French-made Caesar howitzer shells were found, Kulemzin added.

The TASS news agency meanwhile cited local authorities in Russia's Belgorod region as saying that one person had been killed by Ukrainian shelling.

Reuters was not immediately able to verify battlefield reports.

Meanwhile Russian President Vladimir Putin pledged to stay the course in his campaign against Ukraine, warning if counterattacks continue a "more serious" military response will be unleashed.

Putin remained steadfast despite strong evidence that his forces incurred heavy losses in the Ukraine counteroffensive this month.

The Russian leader said the main goal of the campaign continues to be "the liberation of the entire territory of Donbas" - the areas of eastern Ukraine including Donetsk and Luhansk that are largely Russian speaking.

"The plan is not subject to adjustment," Putin said. "Our offensive operations in Donbas itself do not stop. They are going at a slow pace ... The Russian army is occupying newer and newer territories."

In recent weeks, Ukrainian forces have retaken territory previously held by Russian forces in the northeastern Kharkiv region. East and south of there, Russia has concentrated forces for months in Luhansk and Donetsk provinces, to expand territory held by Moscow-backed separatists since 2014.

Meanwhile pressure on Russian President Vladimir Putin mounted both on the battlefield and in the halls of global power as Ukrainian troops waging a counteroffensive pushed Saturday to advance farther into the country's partly recaptured northeast.

At a high-level summit in Uzbekistan, Putin vowed to press his attack on Ukraine despite recent military setbacks but also had to address concerns over the drawn-out conflict voiced by India and China.

"I know that today's era is not of war," Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi told the Russian leader in televised comments as the two met Friday in Uzbekistan. At the same summit a day earlier, Putin acknowledged China's unspecified "questions and concerns" about the war in Ukraine while also thanking Chinese President Xi Jinping for his government's "balanced position" on the conflict.

The hurried retreat of his troops this month from parts of a northeast region they occupied early in the war, together with the rare public reservations expressed by key allies, underscored the challenges Putin faces on all fronts. Both China and India maintain strong ties with Russia and had sought to remain neutral on Ukraine.

Turkey Condemns U.S. Decision To Lift Cyprus Arms Embargo

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Turkey condemned a move by the United States to fully lift its weapons embargo on the divided island of Cyprus starting in 2023, warning it could start an arms race.

The foreign ministry said on Saturday the decision would "further strengthen the Greek Cypriot side's intransigence and negatively affect efforts to resettle the Cyprus issue".

"It will lead to an arms race on the island, harming peace and stability in the eastern Mediterranean," a ministry statement said, calling on the US to reconsider and pursue a balanced policy towards the two sides.

The Mediterranean island has been divided between the internationally recognised Republic of Cyprus and a breakaway state in the north set up after a Turkish invasion launched in 1974 in response to a coup sponsored by the military government then ruling Greece.

The U.S. imposed the arms embargo on the whole of Cyprus in 1987 in the hope it could encourage its reunification. Barred access to American weapons, Cyprus turned to Russia to procure Mi-35 attack helicopters, T-80 tanks, and Tor-M1 anti-aircraft missile systems.

Cyprus President Nicos Anastasiades welcomed on Saturday the "landmark" decision by Washington to fully lift a decades-old embargo, conditional on Nicosia continuing to block Russian warships from its ports.

Anastasiades expressed "great satisfaction" over the announcement "on the complete lifting of the US arms embargo" on his country, the most easterly member of the European Union.

"This is a landmark decision reflecting the burgeoning strategic relationship between the two countries, including in the area of security," he said.

Critics said the embargo was counterproductive by forcing the Republic of Cyprus to seek other partners while Turkey, a NATO member, had stationed forces in its self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus since its 1974 invasion.

"Cyprus has met the necessary conditions under relevant legislation to allow the approval of exports, re-exports, and transfers of defense articles," U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price said on Friday, adding defense trade restrictions would end in 2023.

But Tokayev removed him from those posts after the deadly unrest in January that hinged partly on dissatisfaction with the power that Nazarbayev still wielded, and announced sweeping reforms.

Since Tokayev took over from Nazarbayev in 2019, he has gradually distanced himself from the man who ruled the energy-rich nation with an iron fist.

Tokayev has launched reforms and called for "completely new standards for a political system with fair and open rules of the game".

Riots erupted in the country in January, killing more than 200 people. The unrest, sparked by a sharp rise in fuel prices, also reflected widespread dismay with the country's politics.

Both countries host Russian military bases and are members of several Russia-led military and economic blocs.

Tajik President Emomali Rakhmon and his Kyrgyz counterpart Sadyr Japarov were attending a meeting of a Russia- and China-led regional body this week when the border violence erupted.

On Saturday, Japarov said in an address to the nation that Kyrgyzstan would not give up any land in the disputed area.

"We will not stop even for a minute our efforts to settle the Kyrgyz-Tajik dispute as quickly as possible," he said.

that Tajikistan says was struck by a Kyrgyz drone. The administration of Tajikistan's northern Sughd province - where the clashes erupted - said tensions were easing in the border area.

"As a result of meetings between Tajik and Kyrgyz delegations the situation on the border is stabilizing, people are returning to normal life," it said in a statement.

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Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan Ceasefire Holds Up After Border Fighting

BISHKEK (Dispatches) - Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan reported no major combat incidents on Saturday, indicating that a ceasefire they agreed after intense fighting on Friday remained in effect despite accusations of sporadic shelling by both sides.

The two former Soviet republics clashed over a border dispute this week, accusing each other of using tanks, mortars, rocket artillery and assault drones to attack outposts and nearby settlements, leaving at least 54 dead.

Central Asian border issues largely stem from the Soviet era when Moscow tried to divide the region between groups whose settlements were often located amidst those of other ethnicities.

Kyrgyzstan, which said 24 of its citizens had been killed and about 137,000 evacuated from the conflict area, accused Tajik forces of shelling its border outposts on several occasions on Saturday.

Tajikistan has not given any official casualty numbers, but security sources said 30 people have been killed this week, including 15 who were in a mosque

that Tajikistan says was struck by a Kyrgyz drone.

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Diplomatic Spat After Chile Leader Snubs New Israeli Ambassador

SANTIAGO (Dispatches) - A diplomatic tussle intensified after Chile's president put off accepting the credentials of Israel's new ambassador to Santiago over the killing in the occupied West Bank of a Palestinian teenager.

In response, Israel's foreign ministry summoned Chilean ambassador Jorge Carvajal for what it called a reprimand at a meeting where, it said, "Israel's response will be made clear."

The dispute began on Thursday when Chilean foreign minister Antonia Urrejola informed newly appointed Israeli ambassador Gil Artzyeli that Chilean President Gabriel Boric was postponing a meeting to accept his credentials until October.

"That's because today is a sensitive day because of the death of a minor," a spokesperson from Chile's ministry of foreign affairs said in a text message, referring to the death of Odai Trad Salah, the 17-year-old Palestinian boy that day.

Salah was shot in the head by Israeli forces in the village of Kufr Dan near the occupied West Bank city of Jenin, becoming the 149th Palestinian to be killed by Israel this year.

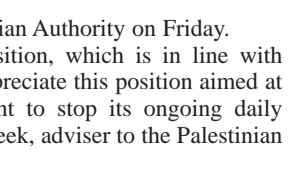
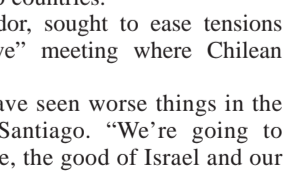
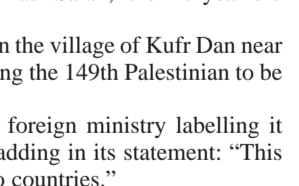
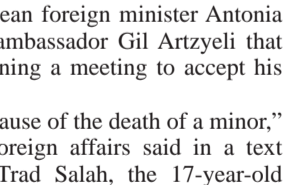
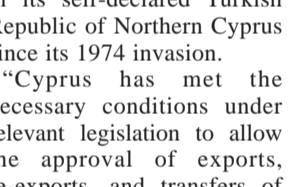
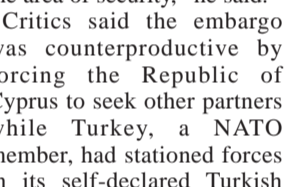
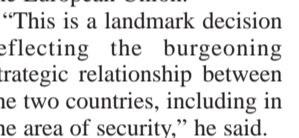
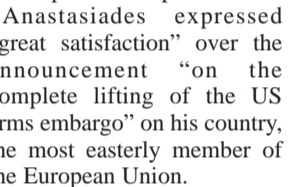
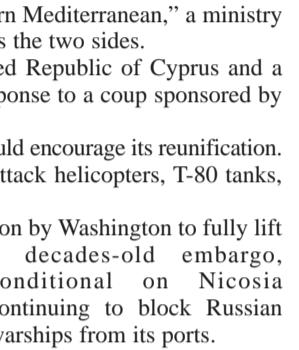
Israel assailed the snub on Friday with its foreign ministry labelling it "puzzling and unprecedented behavior" and adding in its statement: "This seriously harms the relations between the two countries."

On Thursday, Artzyeli, the new ambassador, sought to ease tensions following what he said was an "extensive" meeting where Chilean authorities repeatedly apologized.

"Being an Israeli and a Jew my people have seen worse things in the last 4,000 years," he told reporters in Santiago. "We're going to overcome this incident for the good of Chile, the good of Israel and our bilateral relations."

Boric's move drew praise from the Palestinian Authority on Friday.

"We welcome the Chilean president's position, which is in line with international law and resolutions, and we appreciate this position aimed at applying pressure on the Israeli government to stop its ongoing daily crimes against our people," said Ahmad al-Deek, adviser to the Palestinian foreign minister.



Qatar World Cup Looms as Money-Spinner for Dubai



DUBAI (Dispatches) - The United Arab Emirates did not qualify for the Qatar World Cup but it will be a winner anyway if an overspill of fans floods its hotels, restaurants and planes.

With little investment the UAE, and in particular Dubai, stands to gain if, as expected, supporters opt to stay in the tourism hotspot instead of tiny Persian Gulf neighbor Qatar during the November-December tournament.

High accommodation prices in the Qatari capital Doha and Dubai's more permissive environment -- including a wider availability of alcohol -- could entice fans, experts say.

Budget airline flydubai will run at least 30 return flights a day to Doha, just an hour away, part of a daily airlift of 160 shuttle services from cities in the resource-rich Persian Gulf.

Dubai "has relatively relaxed social standards with respect to certain aspects of culture, such as alcohol consumption and clothing codes", said James Swanston, a Middle East and North Africa economist at Capital Economics.

Any economic windfall, and reflected glory from the first World Cup on Arab soil, will come less than two years after Doha and the UAE were daggers-drawn over a regional blockade that isolated Qatar from its neighbors.

Dubai Sports Council has estimated about a million World Cup fans could arrive in the city. Given that Qatar is expecting a similar number, the prediction may be ambitious.

Nonetheless, Dubai is gearing up with fan zones announced at parks, beaches and in the financial centre, while hotels are offering special packages.

Such deals include shuttle flights and transport to the airport and fan zones.

The UAE is also offering multiple-entry visas at the nominal fee of 100 dirhams (\$27) to people with tickets for World Cup matches.

Visiting fans won't be Dubai's only World Cup commuters. Firas Yassin, a French-Lebanese Dubai resident, booked a day-trip to see France's opening game after being "shocked" by the price of Doha hotel rooms.

Yassin will fly in with his wife five hours before the clash with Denmark on November 26, and leave a few hours after the final whistle having realised a life-long dream to see "Les Bleus" play live.

"I'm going to visit the city, watch the match and then go back to my place in Dubai," the 34-year-old told AFP.

Expat Sport, which is licensed by FIFA to sell match hospitality packages for the games in Doha, noted that "convenience" was a key factor in people choosing to stay in Dubai.

It cited "the regular shuttle flights operating between the two cities and it only being an hour flight".

One Dubai hotel, on the man-made, frond-shaped Palm island, will be given over entirely to football fans. "We have had a surge of bookings from Mexico, UK, Europe and India," Expat Sport said. "Room nights are going fast and we expect to be fully booked at this rate."

The UAE's hotel occupancy this year is already more than 40 percent higher than Covid-hit 2019, with a "strong tourism performance" expected this winter, Dubai emir and UAE Vice President Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum said on Sunday.

As of May, Dubai had 769 hotels with more than 140,000 rooms, a significant rise from early 2019, according to official figures.

Shuttle flights will also run from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Oman to relieve pressure on accommodation in Doha, a city of 2.4 million.

But "relative to other Persian Gulf states, Dubai does hold an advantage with its standing as a major tourist destination already", Swanston said.

Violent Death of Moon Chrysalis May Have Created Saturn's Rings



PARIS (Dispatches) - Discovered by Galileo 400 years ago, the rings of Saturn are about the most striking thing astronomers with small telescopes can spot in our solar system.

But even today, experts cannot agree on how or when they formed.

A new study published Thursday in the prestigious journal Science sets out to provide a convincing answer.

Between 100-200 million years ago, an icy moon they named Chrysalis broke up after getting a little too close to the gas giant, they conclude.

While most of it made impact with Saturn, its remaining fragments broke into small icy chunks that form the planet's signature rings.

"It's nice to find a plausible explanation," Jack Wisdom, professor of planetary sciences at MIT and lead author of the new study, told AFP.

Saturn, the sixth planet from the Sun, was formed four and a half billion years ago, at the beginning of the solar system.

But a few decades ago, scientists suggested that Saturn's rings appeared much later: only about 100 million years ago.

The hypothesis was reinforced by observations made by the Cassini probe, which orbited Saturn from 2004 to 2017.

"But because no one could think of a way to make the rings 100 million years ago, some people have been questioning the reasoning that led to that deduction," said Wisdom.

By constructing complex mathematical models, Wisdom and colleagues found an explanation that both justified the timeline, and allowed them to better understand another characteristic of the planet, its tilt.

Saturn has a 26.7 degree tilt. Being a gas giant, it would have been expected that the process of accumulating matter that led to its formation would have prevented tilt.

Scientists recently discovered that Titan, the largest of Saturn's 83 moons, is migrating away from the planet, at a rate of 11 centimeters a year.

This changes the rate at which Saturn's axis of tilt loops around the vertical — the technical term is "precession." Think of a spinning top drawing circles.

Around a billion years ago, this wobble frequency came into sync with Neptune's wobbly orbit, creating a powerful gravitational interaction called "resonance."

In order to maintain this lock, as Titan kept moving out, Saturn had to tilt, scientists argued.

But that explanation hinged on knowing how mass was distributed in the planet's interior, since the tilt would have behaved differently if it were concentrated more at its surface or the core.

In the new study, Wisdom and colleagues modeled the planet's interior using gravitational data gathered by Cassini during its close approach "Grand Finale," its last act before plunging into Saturn's depths.

The model they generated found Saturn is now slightly out of sync with Neptune, which necessitated a new explanation — an event powerful enough to cause the drastic disruption.

Working through the mathematics, they found a lost moon fit the bill.

"It's pulled apart into a bunch of pieces and those pieces subsequently get pulled apart even more, and gradually rolls into the rings."

The missing Moon was baptized Chrysalis by MIT's Wisdom, likening the emergence of Saturn's rings to a butterfly emerging from a cocoon.



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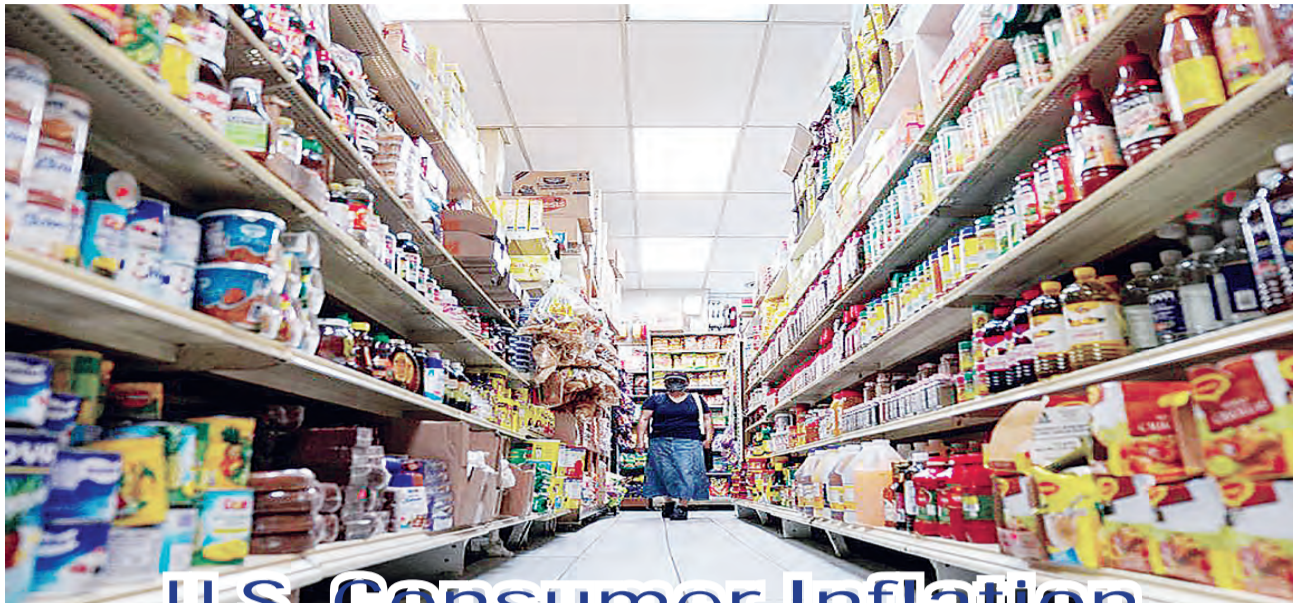


Suez Canal Authority to Raise Transit Fees by 15% in 2023

CAIRO (Dispatches) - Egypt plans to raise fees for ships passing through the Suez Canal by 15% in 2023, the canal authority's chairman Osama Rabie said.

Transit fees for bulk and tourist ships will be raised by 10%, Rabie added.

The fee increase will be applied starting Jan. 1, 2023.



U.S. Consumer Inflation Expectations Fall in September

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - U.S. consumers' near-term inflation expectations fell to a one-year low in September and the outlook over the next five years also improved, easing fears that the Federal Reserve could raise interest rates by a full percentage point next week.

The University of Michigan's survey followed in the wake of data this week showing a surprise increase in consumer prices in August, which raised concerns that high inflation was becoming entrenched.

"This more or less silences those calls for a 100-basis-point hike next week," said Jennifer Lee, a senior economist at BMO Capital Markets in Toronto.

The University of Michigan survey's reading of one-year inflation expectations dropped to 4.6%, the lowest since September 2021, from 4.8% in August. The survey's five-year inflation outlook slipped to 2.8%, falling below the 2.9%-3.1% range for the first time since July 2021.

"The Fed will likely find some reassurance that inflation expectations on this measure do not appear to have become unmoored," said Conrad DeQuadros, senior economic advisor at Brea Capital in New York.

"The Fed's messaging on inflation expectations has shifted to the importance of keeping expectations anchored compared to relying on that to play down higher inflation rates."

U.S. stocks were trading lower while the dollar dipped against a basket of currencies. U.S. Treasury prices were mixed.

Following the release on Tuesday of strong August consumer price readings, financial markets priced in the likelihood that the U.S. central bank would raise its benchmark overnight interest rate by 75 basis points at its Sept. 20-21 policy meeting, with the potential for a 100-basis-point hike, according to CME's FedWatch Tool.

The Fed hiked its policy rate by three-quarters of a percentage point at both its June and July meetings. Since March, it has lifted that rate from near zero to the current 2.25%-2.50% target range.

Consumer sentiment improved moderately in September, lifted by lower gasoline prices, the University of Michigan survey showed. Its preliminary reading on the overall index on consumer sentiment came in at 59.5 this month, slightly up from 58.6 in August. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast a preliminary reading of 60.0 in September.

"With gasoline prices continuing to decline, sentiment should rise further," said Scott Hoyt, senior economist at Moody's Analytics in West Chester, Pennsylvania. "However, recession concerns, rising interest rates, and the impending softening in the labor market could limit the improvement in confidence."

Fitch Hikes Turkey's Growth Forecast, Trims Global GDP Estimate

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Fitch Ratings has raised its growth forecast for Turkey for this year, but lowered its global estimate, as the energy crisis, high inflation and the pace of global monetary policy tightening take a heavy toll on economic prospects.

The global rating agency expects world gross domestic product (GDP) to grow 2.4% in 2022 - revised down 0.5 percentage points from the 2.9% estimate it made in June, according to its Global Economic Outlook September 2022 report released.

It sees the global economy growing by just 1.7% in 2023, a cut of 1 percentage point from its previous forecast of 2.7%. The Turkish economy, on the other hand, is forecast to expand by 5.2% in 2022. It earlier expected the economy to expand 4.5% this year. The agency said Turkish GDP should grow 2.9% in 2023, slightly down from its previous forecast of 3%.

Fitch noted that the Turkish economy showed strong growth in the second quarter with gains in consumption and exports. The eurozone and the United Kingdom are now expected to enter recession later this year and Fitch forecasts that the U.S. will suffer a mild recession in mid-2023.

"We've had something of a perfect storm for the global economy in recent months, with the gas crisis in Europe, a sharp acceleration in interest rate hikes and a deepening property slump in China," chief economist Brian Coulton said in the report.

"The forecast now assumes a full or near complete shut-off of Russian pipeline gas to Europe. Despite EU efforts to find alternatives, total EU gas supply will fall significantly in the near term, with impacts felt through industrial supply chains," the report noted.

Europe is grappling with an energy crisis fueled by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Rocketing gas prices have driven up inflation, pushed some utilities to the brink and threatened recession, prompting urgent proposals by European executives to protect consumers and businesses.



S. Korea's Economy Feared to Slow Down on High Inflation

SEOUL (Dispatches) - The South Korean economy is feared to lose steam as the country is grappling with high inflation and the slowdown in export growth amid growing external uncertainties, Yonhap news agency reported the finance ministry said.

The gloomy outlook came as the world continued to face downside risks due to fast interest rate hikes by the United States and other major nations, China's strict antiviral steps, and instability in the energy market amid the prolonged war between Russia and Ukraine, the ministry said in its economic assessment report, called the Green Book. The ministry mentioned the possibility of an economic slowdown for the fourth month in a row in the monthly report.

"Domestic demand has been on a moderate recovery track on the back of improvements in the job market and the in-person service sector. But high inflation has continued, due mainly to external factors, to affect economic sentiment, and export growth has weakened, which sparked concerns over an economic slowdown," the report said.

In August, consumer prices, a key gauge of inflation, jumped 5.7 per cent from a year earlier over high energy and commodity prices.

Exports, the key growth driver, rose 6.6 per cent on-year last month to come to US\$56.67 billion. August also marked the 22nd consecutive month that the country's exports have logged an on-year expansion, but they began to mark single-digit growth in June following a double-digit increase for more than a year, according to Yonhap.

Japan Logs Record Trade Deficit on Weak Yen

ANKARA (Dispatches) - Japan ran its biggest single-month trade deficit on record in August as imports surged on high energy costs and a slump in the yen, exposing the economy's vulnerability to external price pressures.

The growing trade deficit highlights the fragile nature of Japan's economic recovery which has so far largely remained intact despite a high price tag firms are paying for imports that is aggravated by the yen's slide to a 24-year low and rising prospects of a global slowdown.

Imports jumped 49.9% in the year to August, driven by costs of crude oil, coal and liquefied natural gas (LNG), and causing the trade deficit to swell to 2.8173 trillion yen (\$19.71 billion), the biggest shortfall on record.

The gain in imports was bigger than a median market forecast for a 46.7% rise in a Reuters poll and outstripped a 22.1% year-on-year increase in exports in the same month, the Ministry of Finance data showed.

"Imports are on the rise as high raw material prices continued and supply disruptions eased, while exports are sluggish," said Takeshi Minami, chief economist at Norinchukin Research Institute.

"Costs will rise if imports go up without any change to the size of the global economy. It will lead to the importing of inflation."

August's trade gap marked the 13th consecutive month of year-on-year shortfalls and was bigger than the 2.3982 trillion yen deficit expected in a Reuters poll.

The yen's fall by nearly 20% over the past six months added to higher import costs, aggravating already high costs of energy and raw materials.

Oil imports from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and coal and LNG from Australia strongly drove up overall imports.

By region, exports bound for China, Japan's biggest trading partner, grew 13.5% year-on-year in value terms on stronger shipments of motor vehicles such as hybrid cars to the country.

Shipments to the world's biggest economy the United States expanded 33.8% in August largely due to stronger motor vehicle and parts exports.

Exports, however, declined 1.2% in volume terms, the data showed.

"Exports aren't growing on a volume basis even though the yen has weakened so much. That will be hard for corporate profitability unless the global economy starts expanding and exports increase," said Minami.

Japan's economy grew for a third straight quarter in April-June, data last week showed, as the lifting of local COVID-19 restrictions boosted consumer and business spending.

China's Economy Perks Up But Property Crisis Worsens

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China's economy showed surprising resilience in August, with faster-than-expected growth in factory output and retail sales shoring up the recovery from the effects of Covid and heatwaves, but a deepening property slump weighed on the outlook.

The better-than-expected figures show the world's second-largest economy is gaining some steam, after narrowly escaping a contraction in the June quarter and lifting recovery prospects slightly for the rest of the year.

Industrial output grew 4.2 per cent in August from a year earlier, the fastest pace since March, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). That beat a 3.8 per cent increase expected by analysts in a Reuters poll and July's 3.8 per cent expansion.

Retail sales rose 5.4 per cent from a year ago, the fastest pace in six months and also beating forecasts for 3.5 per cent growth and the 2.7 per cent gain in July.

"This is due to a lower base for comparison - the Delta wave was weighing on economic activity in August 2021," said Julian Evans-Pritchard, a China economist at Capital Economics.

Although the upbeat data lifts some of the gloom hanging over the sluggish recovery, which had been clouded by weak trade data and slow credit growth, Evans-Pritchard does not expect the strength to sustain into September.

"And while the current virus wave may have peaked, activity is set to remain weak over the coming months amid the deepening property downturn, softening exports and recurring Covid-19 disruptions," he said.

Fixed asset investment grew 5.8 per cent in the first eight months of 2022 from the same period a year earlier, above a forecast 5.5 per cent rise and up from January-July's growth of 5.7 per cent.



In comments following the data, NBS spokesperson Fu Linghui said China's economic improvement in August was "hard won", thanks to supportive policies, but warned the recovery was fragile and that global conditions remained complicated.

In contrast to the upbeat activity data, China's property sector contracted further in August as home prices, investment and sales extended losses.

Property investment last month fell 13.8 per cent, the fastest pace since December 2021, according to Reuters calculations based on official data.

New home prices fell 1.3 per cent year-on-year in August, the fastest since August 2015, extending a 0.9 per cent decline in July.

Once a key driver of economic growth, China's property market has lurched from crisis to crisis since mid-2020 after regulators stepped in to cut developers' excess leverage.

The property market woes have weighed on the world's second-largest economy, with policymakers now scrambling to prevent a protracted downturn.

India Economic Growth to Be Sustained By Consumer Spending Rebound



MUMBAI (Dispatches) - A sharp rebound in consumer spending and rising employment will sustain economic growth in India in the months ahead, the government said in its monthly economic review for August published last week.

It said an increase in private consumption and higher capacity utilization rates had helped private-sector capital expenditure reach one of its highest levels in the last decade.

Business investment has been encouraged by government spending which climbed 35% in April-August compared to the same period a year ago, the report said, adding that tax revenue growth for the government had been buoyant.

The report also said high levels of foreign exchange reserves, sustained foreign direct investment and strong export earnings have provided a reasonable buffer against monetary policy normalisation in advanced economies and the widening of the current account deficit arising from geopolitical conflict.

The Reserve Bank of India on Friday forecast the country's current account deficit would remain within 3% of gross domestic product in the current fiscal year to March 2023 and said it was "eminently financeable".

India is in a better position to calibrate its liquidity levels without abruptly stalling growth, the report said, adding that inflationary pressures in the country appear to be declining.

But it also said that in winter months, geopolitical tensions could climb amid a heightened international focus on energy security and that could test "India's astute handling of its energy needs so far."

"In these uncertain times, it may not be possible to remain satisfied and sit back for long periods. Eternal macroeconomic vigilance is the price for stability and sustained growth," it added.

19 Iranian Companies Work in Ivory Coast

ARAK (IRNA) - The Ambassador of Ivory Coast to Iran, Ouattara Tamakolo, referring to Tehran-Yamoussoukro Economic Cooperation, said that 19 Iranian companies in the economic field and commercial activities are in his country.

Ouattara Tamakolo upon his arrival in Arak Airport in Markazi Province, said that despite good political ties between Iran and Ivory Coast, economic cooperation between the two sides are not as good as they should be.

He added that 19 Iranian trade companies have activities in Ivory Coast, which the country expects much more than this amount, saying that the government of Ivory Coast hopes that the Iranian companies will be more active in commercial issues in the country.



OPEC+ Leaders Like \$100 Oil, Won't Necessarily Defend It

LONDON (Dispatches) - Saudi Arabia and Russia, the de facto leaders of the OPEC+ oil producer group, see \$100 a barrel as a fair price that the global economy can absorb, sources familiar with government thinking in the two countries told Reuters.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, Russia and other allies, known as OPEC+, pumps more than 40% of the 100 million barrels per day of global output. The group has a powerful influence on global fuel prices through its supply policy.

OPEC+ does not explicitly state its preferred price level. Top officials in both Saudi Arabia and Russia have said in recent weeks that the group's policy focus is to ensure that global oil supply matches demand, not defend a certain price.

"Our focus is straightforward - looking at supplies and demand balances over a period of no less than a year and most often a year and a half," a senior OPEC+ source with knowledge of the matter told Reuters.

"There are too many variables outside of human control, case in point COVID in 2020 and the financial crisis of 2008, so we need to be humble."

One of the key measures of supply-demand balance, however, is price. When demand threatens to outstrip supply, prices rise, and vice versa. The statements of group members and whether they increase or reduce supply give a sense of what producers see as a reasonable return for their oil.

Recent signals suggest a preferred price level of around \$90 to \$100 a barrel for Brent crude, the three government sources and analysts told Reuters.

That's higher than the previously perceived level of around \$75 that OPEC+ watchers pegged as the price the group wanted to see

Oil traded at \$100-\$120 for most of the second quarter which alarmed governments in many countries that were already dealing with runaway inflation.

The United States has led countries in pushing Saudi Arabia and other producers to pump more to cool rising prices for over a year.

But top oil producers including Saudi Arabia have made public statements in recent weeks to support prices which had fallen towards \$90 amid weakening outlooks for the global economy and demand.

Those statements culminated in OPEC+ making a symbolic cut in its oil output target of 100,000 barrels per day (bpd), which many analysts interpreted as a signal the group would defend prices above \$90.

The price corridor has risen with rising material costs and inflation, said a separate source briefed on Saudi government debates and another industry source, factors which mean producers need to generate higher revenue from oil to balance their budgets.

"An oil price at \$120-130 is risky and Saudi will prevent that, but at \$100 it won't have a huge impact on the global economy - Saudi would be comfortable with that price," one of the three sources said.

While most OPEC+ producers rely on oil revenue and have different oil price requirements to balance their budgets, Saudi Arabia and Russia have no official price target. Saudi officials have not talked openly about a price target or a price aspiration for years.

Oil nations' coffers, including of Saudi Arabia, were depleted by the pandemic-induced price collapse in 2020. High prices are helping them refill their coffers.

The International Monetary Fund in April projected Saudi Arabia's breakeven oil price - the oil price at which it would balance its budget - at \$79.20 a barrel. The Saudi government does not disclose its assumed breakeven oil price.

"Over \$100 is a windfall for the state," said Karen Young, senior fellow at the Middle East Institute in Washington. "I think the comfortable level is anything above \$80, but fiscal policy is flexible."



Oil at \$100 is also needed for companies around the world to maintain healthy investment levels to ensure supply keeps up with demand, said the source familiar with Saudi government thinking.

Even after falling to \$90 per barrel, oil remains relatively expensive.

Brent only went back above \$90 in February after trading below that level since 2014.

Russia has different motives to Saudi Arabia for its price comfort zone. This year, Moscow has had to sell its crude at a discount to benchmark prices to buyers in Asia, because Europe and the United States have banned or discouraged Russian oil imports in retaliation for the war in Ukraine.

Russia wants oil at not less than \$100 to compensate for the discounts, two industry sources familiar with Russian thinking said. Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak rejected the idea that there was any price collusion.

"We are not talking about price formation, but about the adequacy of supply on the market, so that on the one hand there is no excess, and on the other there is no shortage," Novak said this month.

OPEC has made sporadic attempts to keep prices at a certain level in the past. In 2000, the group came up with a price band mechanism to keep oil between \$22 and \$28. When prices surged well above \$28 a few years later, the band was suspended.

Saudi Arabia and OPEC have also favored oil at \$100 at various times. Saudi Arabia first endorsed \$100 oil in 2012 and in 2018 Saudi officials were saying in private meetings that \$80 to \$100 oil was desirable, sources said at the time.

Such high aspirations took a backseat after developments including the U.S. shale oil boom and a resulting global oversupply and price collapse made them unrealistic, as did the price slide during the COVID pandemic.

Now, tight supply is supporting prices again. Shale growth has dropped down OPEC's list of concerns and forecasters still expect solid growth in oil demand in 2023 despite weaker economic growth and fears of recession. OPEC+ looked to be seeking \$90 as a minimum price, said Tamas Varga of oil broker PVM, referring to Brent.

G7 plans for a price cap on Russian oil aimed at cutting Moscow's revenue while keeping its oil flowing could further support prices if Moscow retaliates, he added.

"It implies that the alliance is intending to defend the \$90 price floor and comes at a time when the proposed Russian oil price cap could lead to retaliatory measures from Russia, tightening the oil balance further," he said.

Arbaeen...

FROM PAGE 1

"We distribute about 5000-6000 rations per meal, between breakfast, lunch and dinner - and we are continuing, God willing, we are happy," said Haider al-Kaabi, who heads a group providing pilgrims with shelter and food free of charge.



For the past weeks, pilgrims from countries including Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia, have been arriving in Karbala, located about 100 kilometers southwest of the Iraqi capital of Baghdad.

Iran's government said on Wednesday that a record number of Iranian pilgrims, more than three million, flocked to Iraq to participate in the Arbaeen commemorations.

Ali Bahadori Jahromi, a spokesman for the Iranian government, said around 1.5 million Iranian pilgrims have already returned from the pilgrimage.

The tradition, which attracts an average of 16 million people from across the world every year, is meant to sympathize with Imam Hussein (AS) on the pains he endured in the event of Karbala, where he and 72 of his companions were brutally slaughtered by Yazid's army.

The ceremony is also fervently observed by Muslims in their own countries across the world.

By the way the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei during a ceremony marking Arbaeen in Tehran hailed the massive turnout of Shiites in this great gathering of Shiites for marking the martyrdom of their Imam Hussein (AS).

In recent years while Shiites have tried to show their unity with massive turnout in Karbala march and processions, enemies of Shiites and especially enemies of Iran and Iraq have tried to undermine this religious unity gathering by negative propagation or painting a negative picture of it like wasting time, money and energy but each time their plot has failed and each time Shiites especially from Iran have had massive presence in this religious event which has turned into the symbol of unity and power of Shiites against ill-wishers.

It is expected the event turn into one of the biggest religious event in the world, something which is not welcomed by foes of Shiites but time has shown us that the more negative propagation has been made against Arbaeen, the less they have been successful to discourage Shiites especially Iranians from showing up in this event especially when the enemies learn that this event is welcomed by middle class people and they rush to Karbala while they are not in good financial condition but they are rich in their beliefs and belief to in their Prophet Household, and this is nothing but the love of Hussein (AS) and God's blessing which removes all hurdles for this spiritual journey.

No Raisi-Biden Meeting...

FROM PAGE 1

Speaking to Qatar's Al Jazeera television network on Thursday, Raisi likewise said direct talks with the U.S. over the nuclear agreement were "of no avail."

The final decision for restoration of the JCPOA rested with the U.S., he said, adding, "The U.S. has to take trust-building measures" towards the Iranian side.

Raisi also told the Doha-based network that any potential removal of the American sanctions had to be accompanied with relevant "guarantees" that Washington would not return the bans again.

The Iranian president censured a raft of new sanctions that Washington had imposed most recently on Iran, asking, "If Washington is after an agreement, why does it apply new sanctions during the course of the nuclear talks?"

Extreme Hunger More Than Doubles in World's Climate Hotspots



LONDON (Dispatches) - From record droughts to catastrophic floods, the world's worst climate hotspots are seeing a surge in acute hunger, according to an Oxfam report that called on rich nations to drastically cut their emissions and compensate low-income countries.

The analysis, "Hunger in a heating world," found that acute hunger had risen 123 percent over six years in the ten most-affected nations, defined by the most number of UN weather appeals.

"The effects of severe weather events are already being felt," Lia Lindsey, Oxfam America's senior humanitarian policy advisory told AFP, adding the report was timed to pressure world leaders at the UN General Assembly to act.

The countries -- Somalia, Haiti, Djibouti, Kenya, Niger, Afghanistan, Guatemala, Madagascar, Burkina Faso and Zimbabwe -- have repeatedly been battered by extreme weather over the last two decades.

An estimated 48 million people across those countries suffer acute hunger, defined as hunger resulting from a shock and causing risks to lives and livelihoods and based on reports compiled by the World Food Programme.

That figure is up from 21 million people in 2016; 18 million people are on the brink of starvation.

The report acknowledges the complexity surrounding the causes of global hunger, with conflict and economic disruption -- including those from the Covid-19 pandemic -- remaining key drivers.

"However, these new and worsening weather extremes are increasingly peeling away the abilities of poor people particularly in low-income countries to stave off hunger and cope with the next shock," it said.

Somalia, for example, is facing its worst drought on record, forcing one million people to flee their homes.

Indonesian Gig Drivers Fear Hardship After Fuel Price Hike

JAKARTA (Dispatches) - Sitting on the side of a Jakarta road anxiously waiting for his phone to ping, driver Muhammad Ridwan says it is now barely worth hurtling through thick smog every day to ferry passengers.

A 30 percent hike in fuel prices spurred hundreds of drivers of the most popular ride-hailing apps to hold protests across Indonesia as they struggle to make ends meet.

"I sometimes don't eat a proper meal the whole day to allocate my cash for fuel. If I don't have fuel, how can I work?," asked Ridwan, a contractor for Gojek -- which alongside Singapore's Grab is among Asia's most valuable start-ups.

The drivers operate in an unregulated market and critics say the firms exploit them as "partners" or contractors, taking large cuts of their daily income.

To cut Indonesia's deficit during rising global inflation and soaring energy prices due to the war in

Ukraine, President Joko Widodo slashed fuel subsidies.

It pushed the price of Petralite -- Indonesia's cheapest fuel choice -- from about 7,650 rupiah (50 cents) to 10,000 (67 cents) per litre.

On-demand drivers say the two ride-hailing giants have only hiked fares slightly -- to the tune of 800 rupiah (5 cents) per kilometre -- to cover the additional costs.

Both Gojek and Grab told AFP they imposed a rate change in line with government regulation.

Gojek, which earlier this year merged with e-commerce platform Tokopedia in a multibillion-dollar deal, said the objective of the rate change was to "support driver partners".

Grab said it was "designed to protect and maintain our driver-partners' welfare".

They both declined to disclose the rate increase but union leaders said it fell short of drivers' expectations.

"Drivers across Indonesia cannot accept the fare adjustment," said Igun Wicaksono, who heads a union of more than 100,000 drivers.

Chabahar Port Crucial...

FROM PAGE 1

Iran and India constructed a multimodal system, and overall, the routes provide a 60 per cent reduction in shipping costs and a 50 per cent reduction in shipment time between Afghanistan-India and other Central Asian countries.

Afghan traders have responded with enthusiasm to Chabahar's reliable trade and transit offerings. Iran and India have provided as lucrative a deal as possible to Afghan traders and at the initial stage provided a 30 per cent discount in customs tariffs, 50 acres of land for Afghan investment, and free cooling storage facilities reported Khaama Press.

The Chabahar port is intended to have a nominal capacity of 86 million tons by 2024, and Afghanistan intends to have a considerable stake in these operations. Afghanistan's strongest prospect for a brighter future is greater trade through the Chabahar port.

Moreover, Afghanistan's main export items are agricultural products which India is the largest market for it, especially, since the market potential is high in Mumbai and Gujarat where Chabahar has direct shipping to these states.

No Dollars for...

FROM PAGE 1

Malik Bostan, a leading currency dealer, said most importers are making payments to Afghan sellers in cash dollars or through Dubai. "The government did not arrange dollars for the imports from Kabul while the importers are barred to buy dollars from the exchange companies or banking channels. This is the case with both Iran and Afghanistan," explained Mr Bostan.

He said in either case dollars from Pakistan are being sent abroad while 'we need them badly.' The Afghan currency is available only in Peshawar where exchange or buying and selling is possible in Pakistani rupees and Afghans, said Zafar Paracha, a currency dealer.

He maintained that Afghan exporters are not ready to sell their goods against Pakistani rupees since the local currency is facing sharp devaluation on a daily basis.

"It's government's illogical decision of not providing dollars for imports from Iran and Afghanistan while the devaluation of rupee is a now a permanent feature," remarked Mr Paracha.

Exchange companies in Karachi said Afghans are not available in the currency market while its rate is the highest in the region. One US dollar is equal to 88 Afghans which is the highest rate compared to Pakistan, Bangladesh and India.

The Afghan government can maintain a high exchange rate as Kabul exports only a few goods like coal and some fruits and vegetables. Since a regular barter system is available, the imports from Tehran will need only a few payments in cash dollars but not in rupees. Currency dealers said the imports from Afghanistan and Iran encouraged dollar smuggling while helping the grey market to expand their business.

Pogba's Brother Likely to Be Charged in Extortion Case

PARIS (Dispatches) - The elder brother of Paul Pogba and four others are "likely to be charged" in an extortion case targeting the French football star, judicial sources said. They are due to appear before a judge later in the day, the sources said. Mathias Pogba, 32, has admitted to being behind a bizarre video published online on August 27 promising "great revelations" about the Juventus player and French national team member. The four others are all close to the Pogba brothers and are aged between 27 and 36.

Borussia Dortmund Plan U.S. Trip in Summer 2023

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Bundesliga heavyweights Borussia Dortmund will tour the United States next year as the club looks to tap into the growing North American football market ahead of the 2026 World Cup, the club said. The German club will tour south-east Asia during this year's World Cup in Qatar with their tour running from November 21 to December 1 and will take in Singapore, Indonesia and Vietnam. The 2022 World Cup will be staged from November 20 to December 18.

Son Ends Goal Drought With Treble

LONDON (Dispatches) - Son Heung-min ended his goal drought as the South Korea star responded to being dropped by hitting an incredible 13-minute hat-trick in Tottenham's 6-2 rout of Leicester.

Son came off the bench to score Tottenham's last three goals, including a pair of brilliant long-range finishes, in an emphatic victory that lifted them into second place in the Premier League.

It was the ideal response from Son after he had been axed for failing to score in his previous eight appearances.

Just days after Tottenham boss Antonio Conte had warned that no player was undroppable, Dejan Kulusevski came in for Son, who finished as the Premier League's joint top scorer last season.

Explaining Son's omission, Conte said: "We needed to start making rotations because playing all the same players in all the games is not good."

Son's eye-catching treble showed he won't sulk when Conte wants to take him out of the firing line, but the 30-year-old will have taken private satisfaction at reminding the Italian of his enduring class.

It was the perfect evening for Tottenham, who bounced back after losing for the first time in eight games this season on Tuesday when Sporting Lisbon scored twice in stoppage-time to seal a 2-0 win in the Champions League.

Tottenham's fifth win from seven league games moved them above Arsenal and level on points with leaders Manchester City.

Son replaced Richarlison in the 59th minute and stole the spotlight as he bagged his long-awaited goal in the 73rd minute.

Receiving Bentancur's pass 30 yards from goal, Son advanced with purpose and rifled a brilliant finish into the top corner, but that was only the start.

Picked out by Kane in the 84th minute, Son repeated his long-range magic as he bent a stunning strike past Ward from 20 yards.

Two minutes later, Son sprinted onto Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg's pass for a cool finish that survived a VAR check for offside as the South Korean celebrated



by triumphantly holding up three fingers.

Earlier Jack Grealish scored his first goal this season and Erling Haaland extended his record-breaking hot streak as Manchester City powered to a 3-0 win over 10-man Wolves. Pep Guardiola's side needed just 56 seconds to take the lead at Molineux as Grealish finally enjoyed a day to remember after a difficult time since joining City from Aston Villa last year.

Haaland doubled City's advantage with his 14th goal in 10 games in all competitions following a £51 million (\$58 million) move from Borussia Dortmund that already appears a bargain.

Wolves lost any chance of a fight-back when Nathan Collins was sent off for an ugly stomach-high foul on Grealish in the first half.

Phil Foden capped City's stroll in the Midlands sunshine as the Premier League champions moved to the top of the table.

Unbeaten City are two points clear of second-placed Arsenal, who would regain pole position if they win at Brentford on Sunday.

Even Guardiola may run out of superlatives to describe the 22-year-old Norwegian if he continues this astonishing run.

Haaland was named Premier League Player of the Month for August after his blistering start to the season and he is already making his case for the September award.

He has netted in seven successive games for City and is the first player to score in their first four Premier League away appearances.

Showing their hunger to win the title for a fifth time in six seasons, City are unbeaten in a club record 22 away league matches since losing at Tottenham in their opening game last season.

Haaland Wins Premier League Player Of the Month For August

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester City forward Erling Haaland has been named the Premier League's Player of the Month for August after scoring nine goals in five games in a brilliant start to his career in England.

Haaland, 22, bagged a brace on his league debut against West Ham United and scored once at Newcastle United before hitting consecutive hat-tricks against Crystal Palace and Nottingham Forest as City won four of their opening five games.

The Norwegian, who joined City from Borussia Dortmund, beat competition from Arsenal duo Gabriel Jesus and Martin Odegaard as well as Fulham striker Aleksandar Mitrovic among others to win the award.

According to Opta, only former Liverpool striker Luis Suarez has scored more goals in a single month in the Premier League, with 10 goals in December 2013.

"I am delighted to win this award for the first time — it was an incredible start of the season for the team and I am grateful to everyone who voted," Haaland said in a statement.

"We all wanted to hit the ground running this season, so winning four games out of five was a great start for us in what is the most challenging competition in the world. I am happy to have played my part by scoring goals.

"Hopefully, I can continue to support the team ... and carry on our strong start to the season."

Giroud, Dembele Back In France Squad

PARIS (Dispatches) - Olivier Giroud and Ousmane Dembele were both included in the final France squad before the World Cup, as coach Didier Deschamps dealt with the absence of a host of big names for a Uefa Nations League double header and faced up to the possibility of Paul Pogba missing the World Cup.

Juventus midfielder Pogba — who scored in France's 4-2 win over Croatia in the 2018 World Cup final — faces a race against time to be fit for this year's tournament in Qatar after undergoing knee surgery last week.

"He will do everything to come back quickly, without taking risks. But nobody today can say yes or no with certainty," Deschamps told reporters in Paris.

"The number one condition is that he has recovered from his injury. I have never taken a player to a tournament if he has not fully recovered.

"I don't have the answers today but I would never take a player — whoever that might be — if there is a chance he is not fit for the first match," added Deschamps.

"He will not come if he is not ready. There is no point coming just for the sake of it. Even he doesn't want that."

France start their World Cup campaign against Australia on November 22.

Karim Benzema is also sidelined for this month's matches with a thigh injury suffered playing for Real Madrid.

Van Gaal Trims Dutch Squad

AMSTERDAM (Dispatches) - Netherlands coach Louis van Gaal cut his squad down to 25 for this month's Nations League games against Poland and Belgium as he gave a strong indication of the players he will take to the World Cup.

Van Gaal had named a preliminary squad of 32 a fortnight ago but trimmed it down, keeping the uncapped trio of goalkeepers Andries Noppert and Remko Pasveer and the Ajax Amsterdam attacker Kenneth Taylor.



They saved a match point in a nerve-jangling second set but eventually succumbed 7-6(0) 6-7(6) 6-3. "It just sucks, because these matches have come down to a few points and they've not

Britain Bow out of Davis Cup

GLASGOW (Dispatches) - Britain were knocked out of the Davis Cup Finals as Andy Murray and partner Joe Salisbury lost a deciding doubles to Dutch pair Wesley Koolhof and Matwe Middelkoop in Glasgow.

Just as against the United States in their opening tie on Wednesday, Murray and doubles world number one Salisbury took to the court with the tie locked at 1-1.

gone our way," Murray said. "I have been fortunate to play a lot of these matches over the years, and, come through them.

"That hasn't happened this time around, and I feel sad about that, because... I think we had the possibility to have a really good run here."

While the Dutch celebrated wildly at sealing their place in the quarter-finals for the first time since 2005, Britain were left with their hopes in tatters. The Dutch pair broke serve to lead 5-3 in the decider and closed it out in nerveless fashion on Koolhof's serve.

Earlier, Dan Evans had given Britain the lead with a comfortable victory over Tallon Griekspoor, but Cameron Norrie was overpowered by Botic van de Zandschulp.

Murray and Salisbury fell just short again, as they did on Wednesday when they lost in three sets to Jack Sock and Rajeev Ram.

Neymar Defends Vinicius Over Criticism of Goal Celebrations

MADRID (Dispatches) - Neymar and Mother leading Brazilian players leapt to the defense of their compatriot Vinicius Jr. after the Real Madrid forward was advised to tone down his goal celebrations.

Vinicius has made a fast start to the season with five goals and three assists in all competitions but has infuriated opponents in LaLiga with his celebrations, which include dancing near the corner flag.

The 22-year-old has been widely criticised in Spain but his international team mate Neymar, who plays for Paris St Germain, has encouraged him to express himself.

"Dribble, dance and be you! Happy just the way you are. Go for it my boy, next goal we dance," Neymar wrote on Instagram.

Veteran Brazil centre back Thiago Silva also told Vinicius to keep dancing.

"Don't let anyone take away your happiness," he said.

A panellist on a Spanish football show said Vinicius was not respecting his opponents with his celebrations, comparing his behaviour to that of a monkey — which immediately sparked backlash on social media as it was construed as racist.

The panellist, Pedro Bravo, later took to Twitter to issue a clarification, saying he used the "monkey" expression to say Vinicius was "doing stupid things".



Alcaraz Loses to Auger-Aliassime

VALENCIA (Dispatches) - US Open champion Carlos Alcaraz crashed to defeat on his debut as world number one, losing 6-7(3) 6-4 6-2 to Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime in their Davis Cup Finals group-stage clash.

The 19-year-old Spaniard, who became the youngest player to top the ATP rankings when he claimed the title at Flushing Meadows on Sunday, joined Sergi Bruguera's squad on Tuesday and did not play in their opening 3-0 victory over Serbia.

"I didn't arrive in very good physical condition. Very, very tough. The court is very slow. I had just two days to adapt my game to this court. It was really tough day," Alcaraz said.

Taking to the court after Roberto Bautista Agut beat Vasek Pospisil to put Spain up 1-0, Alcaraz sealed a tight opening set in the tiebreak, before his 13th-ranked opponent switched gears.

"It's a big win for me and for the team," Auger-Aliassime said. "For me, because Carlos is the new number one. But he made a big effort, so we have to pay him respect for flying across the Atlantic and coming here to play... credit for that.

"I think I showed at the end I was a bit better in the third set and I gave it all."

The 22-year-old Auger-Aliassime's first win over a world number one dragged his team back into the tie at 1-1 and he then teamed up with Pospisil to face Marcel Granollers and Pedro Martinez in the doubles decider.

